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ABSTRACT

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Debating the 1990 Luso-Brazilian Orthographic Accord

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A case of corpus cultivation language planning is reported here: the 1990 Luso-Brazilian Orthographic Accord for the seven Portuguese-speaking countries discussed here, signed by representatives of all seven countries that have Portuguese as their official language. Socio-historical background is provided about Portuguese standardization and spread, the distribution of the language in the world today, and the development of its spelling norms. Discussion of the Accord and the ensuing debate is carried out through an analysis of the positions taken and of the arguments used by authors in a selection of scholarly and journalistic articles. These arguments are contrasted with Geerts, van den Broeck and Verdoodt (1977) who reported on a similar case. The author concludes that while most of the debate revolves around issues of linguistic efficiency, the Accord and its proponents are primarily concerned with political and diplomatic efficiency.

Brasil e Portugal travam uma guerra surda em torno de um idioma que o mundo ignora, mesmo em suas melhores manifestações literárias (Nelson Ascher, *Folha de São Paulo*, January 23, 1993).

Introduction

Language planning involves "deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (Cooper, 1989:45). In the present case, these efforts concentrate on the structure of the code, more specifically on the written code of the language. This is a case of *corpus planning*, in Kloss' terms (in Cooper, 1989), and of *cultivation* in Neustupny's....further discrimination of different language planning efforts (1974:35). It has to do with "the creation of new forms, the modification of old ones, [and/] or the selection from alternative forms in a...written code" (Cooper, 1989:31). In fact this is a case of what Cooper calls "*renovation* for the object of corpus planning" (1989:154). Cooper defines the term renovation as "an effort to change an already developed code,

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whether in the name of efficiency, aesthetics, or national or political ideology " (p. 154, emphasis added).

The main concern here is to examine the present state of the Lusophone orthographic quest–the implementation of the 1990 Orthographic Accord that unifies the two official orthographies of Portuguese currently in effect in Brazil and in Portugal. As a speaker of Brazilian Portuguese, I have not attempted to be neutral but have tried to write an unbiased report–in spite of Gundersen's warning that "it is probably impossible for a native writer to be completely unbiased on the language question" (1977:248).

Spelling reforms seem to awaken people's language attitudes and inevitably generate heated debates: see reports for Norwegian (Gundersen, 1977), Hebrew (Rabin, 1977), and Irish (Murchú, 1977). As Rabin explains, orthographic planning affects the whole population of users of the language, and spelling changes "cannot be introduced gradually, but require an immediate willingness to change habits" (1977:172). Thus the debate, though "intended to be objective,...becomes partisan and often polemic as it goes along" (Gundersen, 1977:247). The Luso-Brazilian case is not original in this regard.

The debate around the Orthographic Accord occurs within a complex context. I provide some background on the code it modifies, and on the community of users whose language behavior it aims to influence. The following sections describe the historical development of Portuguese standardization. A sketch of the distribution of the language in the world today offers a glimpse at the socio-economic features of the nations involved, while a brief history of the development of Portuguese spelling norms locates the 1990 Orthographic Accord across time. In the presentation of the Luso-Brazilian debate, I introduce the different positions held and then discuss the various types of arguments.

The Portuguese Language and the Lusophone Community

With its earliest records traced back to the 12th century, Portuguese has been a standardized language since the 15th century. With Camões' 1572 epic, *Os Lusíadas*, modern Portuguese acquired full citizenship as a literary language. However, the first grammars and dictionaries appeared only in the 16th and 17th centuries (Spina, 1987).

The discoveries of the Portuguese navigators spread their language to America, Africa, and Asia. Today there are at least 160 million people whose native language is Portuguese, most of them in Brazil and Portugal. Five African countries have Portuguese as their official language: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau,

Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. (These are the so-called PALOP countries–*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*.)

Brazilian sociolinguist Elia (1989) distinguishes five stages of Portuguese geolinguistic spread: Old (Portugal), new (Brazil), very new (the PALOP), lost (Goa, Macao, and East Timor), and dispersed (immigrant communities). The taxonomy points to the diversity of the Lusophone world, disallowing a definition of *speech community* that would suit all five areas. For the present purposes, the seven countries that have Portuguese as their official language shall be considered as the Portuguese *language community*.

The status of Portuguese within this community varies tremendously. Elia (1989) adapts a set of language planning concepts as labels to draw distinctions for the status of Portuguese in the different nations: indigenous or transplanted language (i or t), mother language or lingua franca (m or f), official language (l), national language (i.e., spoken throughout the country [n]), and standard language of culture (language used in education, mass media, and literature [c]). The table below reproduces Elia's classification, lists the main languages in each country, and offers a glance at the socio-economic features of the seven Lusophone countries through figures for population (in millions), Gross National Product (in billions of $US), and literacy rate (as percentage of population over 7).

	Status (Elia, 1989)	Main language(s) spoken	Pop. 1991†	GNP 1990†	Literacy rate†
Portugal	i, m, o, n, c	Portuguese	10.42	50.7	86.0
Brazil	t, m, o, n, c	Portuguese	146.15	450.5	82.2
Angola	t, f, o, c	Portuguese & African Lgs.	10.28	5.9	41.7
Mozambique	t, f**, o, c	Portuguese & African Lgs.	14.63	1.14***	32.9
Guinea-Bissau	t, o, c	GB Creole & African Lgs.	0.94	0.176	36.5
Cape Verde	t, o, c	Cape Verdean Creole	0.34	0.281	65.5
São Tomé & Príncipe	t, o, c	Creoles	0.12	0.047	57.4

*PALOP, **added to Elia's (1989) classification, ***1991, †*Almanaque Abril* 1993

As the table above indicates, having Portuguese as the official language is perhaps the only factor that applies equally to all seven countries. Politically speaking,

Brazil looms large, with a population and an economy a number of times bigger than all of the other Lusophone countries combined. Portugal, besides its tradition as a former colonial power and as the country where the language came into being, has a most important economic strength in its EEC membership. The PALOP are obviously at a political disadvantage, since they are peripheral states with minute economies, so it is not difficult to surmise what leads them to have little interest in the debate over the Accord.

We can establish three groups of countries based on two criteria: size of population and economy, and, status of Portuguese in relation to other languages. On the one hand we have Portugal and Brazil–long established nations with relatively large populations and economies, where Portuguese is universally spoken and widely written and read. On the other hand, we have the recently independent PALOP countries–where Portuguese is the only official language of government and education but has limited currency. The PALOP can in turn be grouped in two different sets: the larger mainland countries of Angola and Mozambique, where Portuguese is challenged in most domains by various African languages; and the tiny island-states of Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe, where it is challenged by the local Creole languages. Guinea-Bissau is a borderline case in terms of size and of the status of Portuguese, since it shares much of the macrosociolinguistic situation of Angola and Mozambique, while also having its own local Creole.

The existence of an indigenous language variety belonging to no ethnic group creates an unstable diglossic situation in Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guinea-Bissau. Despite the governments' positions of maintaining Portuguese as the sole official language, the prominence of the Creoles is unquestionable (Elia, 1989:39), and their standardization for official adoption is seen as a necessary step by some.[1] The following segment of the talk given by the representative of Guinea-Bissau, M. A. Henriques, at a 1983 meeting to assess the state of the language in the world, quoted in Elia, summarizes the attitude of Portuguese speakers in the three small African countries:

> Portuguese is seen as the official language, it is seen as the language of scientific knowledge, it is seen as the language for international communication....we have a profound interest in Portuguese, not only for the historic relations we have with Portugal, but also with the privileged relations that we have with Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe, and also because, in fact, Portuguese is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.[2] (1989:41)

In civil-war ravaged Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese is the language of the government and of schooling as well as the language of wider communication, since there are no common local creole languages. Standard Portuguese is spoken mainly in urban centers, and as a lingua franca among the different ethnic groups.[3] The sociolinguistic situation of both these countries is rather complex, and the status of Portuguese is unstable.

The numbers reported vary, but we can assume that around 25% of the population of Mozambique routinely use the language of the former colonial power, though no more than 1.2% consider it their mother-tongue ("Português é," 1993; Passanisi & Wolfe, 1991; Elia, 1989). Passanisi and Wolfe present an ethnographic account of what they term "the identity crises" of educated Mozambicans toward their language resources. They state that "a combination of national languages and Portuguese is needed as a survival tactic" (1991:33), and add that "being fluent in Portuguese has been and continues to be a primary route to general information about Mozambique, to continued state-supported educational opportunities, and to vocational access" (30).

The situation in Angola might be roughly the same, but there are reasons to believe that Portuguese has a larger currency there, since a sizable group takes it as their mother-tongue. According to Cristóvão (in Elia, 1989:32-3), 60% of the residents of the province of Luanda, which includes the capital city, declared Portuguese as their native language in a 1983 census. In the hinterland however, Portuguese has but a marginal role.

This brief sketch of the Lusophone community sheds light on the attitude of the PALOP countries to accept whatever is decided by Brazil and Portugal in respect to the future of the Orthographic Accord. Their position is consistent with Neustupny's claim (1974) that less developed speech communities are concerned with issues of language policy, and not so much with issues of cultivation such as the ones tackled by a spelling unification. PALOP language planners cannot prioritize Portuguese corpus planning when they are still struggling with status planning issues in a scenario of extremely limited economic resources. After all, Portuguese was chosen as the official language because of its advantages as a fully standardized language.

In a report on the opinions of PALOP intellectuals about the Accord, São Tomé and Príncipe journalist Conceição Lima warns:

> In a country where basic problems are yet to be solved–lack of classrooms, chairs, glass on the windows–talking about an orthographic agreement has a vaguely surrealist resonance....An Accord for a

> population that is 60% to 70% illiterate or for people who have no reading habits, for whom orality is fundamental, and where the teachers of Portuguese have huge difficulties relating to the language they teach?! (Neves, 1991)

Despite the rhetoric implicit in the title of the 1990 Orthographic Accord, i.e. that it is an aspiration of the larger Lusophone world, it is a fact that the PALOP can hardly afford to get involved in this debate. The Accord is therefore a Luso-Brazilian enterprise.

Portuguese Spelling Norms[4]

Portuguese has a long orthographic history. Historians of the language agree about the existence of three distinct phases in the development of its spelling norms (Williams, 1938; Cuesta & Luz, 1971:335-41, in I. Castro, Duarte & Leiria, 1987:117; Houaiss, 1991).

In the early stages of codification, there was no centralized spelling rule, no orthography to speak of, since the few writers at the time used the Latin alphabet as best they could in writing down the sounds of Galician-Portuguese. The initial spelling criterion was essentially phonetic, with a few "etymological tendencies from the pen of some scribes who were used to copying and drafting documents in Medieval Latin" (Hauy, 1989:32). This "phonetic phase" lasted until the 16th century.

The influence of classical Latin and Greek during the Renaissance brought a variety of philological spellings. Pinto (1988) describes the work of 17th and 18th century grammarians as extremely concerned with orthographic norms, but yet unable to escape the contradictions of their two masters (i.e., traditional Portuguese phonetic spelling, and the contemporary cult of classic traditions which favored etymological spelling). Houaiss calls this second phase the "pseudo-etymological phase," adding that at this point "spelling becomes more difficult, and pseudo-experts who advocate the use of old-fashioned or mistaken spellings determine the history of words" (1991:11). Bueno (1967) refers to a "mixed norm," regulated by dictionary makers and independent "orthographers," which developed in Brazil as a result of the etymological tendencies active until the 19th century.

The third phase can rightly be called an orthography, since the power of the "experts" and of the law is added to the enforcement of new directions toward a simplified spelling system. As Bueno puts it, "the orthography of the Portuguese language developed all the way to 1911 without any [successful] official interference, either from the government or from the Academies" (1967:277). Houaiss (1991) calls

this the "simplified phase." More realistically perhaps, the Portuguese grammarians Cuesta and Luz call it "the period of orthographic reforms" (in R. Castro 1987:117).

20th Century Orthographies

Like other Romance-language-speaking countries, Portugal has its own language academy–the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon (ACL)–founded in 1779. The Brazilian Academy of Language and Literature (ABL) was created in the late 19th century. ACL and ABL have been the main institutions dealing with the regulation of Portuguese orthography.

Starting 1885, Gonçalves Viana, a Portuguese language scholar, devised a plan for a spelling reform, which he concluded in 1904 with the publication of his *Ortografia Nacional*. In 1911 the newly installed republican government promulgated a slightly revised version of Viana's proposal known as "the New Orthography." However, no attempt was made to consult the Brazilian government or ABL. I. Castro (1987:XI) refers to the 1911 Reform as "magnificent, but unilateral"; in other words, linguistically efficient but diplomatically inadequate.

There was domestic disagreement in Brazil concerning Portugal's "linguistic imperialism." ABL's choice to adopt the New Orthography in 1915, and the subsequent move four years later to revoke its own decision reflect that. In any case, the prevailing Brazilian opinion was that Portugal had created a schism between the two countries (Castro, et al., 1987:209). Despite the Portuguese government's optimism in a 1920 official addendum to the 1911 decree, which referred to the "enthusiastic acceptance of the New Orthography in Brazil" (Freeman, 1965:108), there was great oscillation in orthographic use in Brazil, with the press and intellectuals mostly against the New Orthography of 1911.[5]

In 1923, diplomatic efforts were started for a Luso-Brazilian dialogue, and the subsequent changes in the Brazilian political scene prompted ABL to sign a minor agreement with ACL in 1931 (Houaiss, in Augusto, 1992b; Bueno, 1967). Even though the 1931 Agreement was turned into law in both countries, "nobody seems to have taken it very seriously" (I. Castro, 1987:XI). In Portugal, it did not include items suppressing the silent consonants (see section below). In Brazil, the Agreement was promulgated twice (1931 and 1933), suspended in 1934, and reestablished in 1938 (Castro, et al., 1987).

The 1940s brought the "editorial war between the *Vocabulários Ortográficos*" (I. Castro, 1987:XI), when the two Academies published their two independent and slightly

discrepant orthographic manuals (ACL's *Vocabulário Ortográfico* in 1940; ABL's *Pequeno Vocabulário Ortográfico* in 1943). According to Bueno, in Brazil "neither the government offices nor the press took any notice of these documents" (1967:278). However, the orthographic debate soon resumed. It was fueled initially by the Brazilian government's mandate that all official documents be written according to the 1931 Agreement, and later by the ABL attempt to produce a joint *Vocabulário Ortográfico* with the Portuguese Academy, which resulted in the new (and to this date controversial) Spelling Reform of 1945.

This Bilateral Agreement of 1945 is the crux of the present call for the unification. Drafted in Lisbon by representatives from the two Academies, it was promulgated by the Portuguese government after some debate. In Brazil, the public outcry against it was such that it was never approved by the legislative body at the time. Apparently the main reason for the negative reaction was the unilateral rules on the use of accents based on European Portuguese pronunciation (Freeman, 1965:115; Castro, et al., 1987:213).

The 1943 Norm set by ABL's *Pequeno Vocabulário Ortográfico* became the Brazilian orthographic norm, in effect to this day. In Portugal, the official orthography in effect has been the one set by the 1945 Reform, ironically called the Bilateral Agreement. Thus Portuguese had two official standard orthographies. The Brazilian norm was simplified in a law of 1971, and has remained unchanged since then. The Portuguese norm was also slightly altered in 1973 (I. Castro, 1987:XIII).

Reunification efforts have periodically been made. In 1967, a group of Portuguese and Brazilian scholars met in vain to draft a project for unification. In another attempt in 1975, a proposal was drawn up but it was short-lived due to the political scenario: Brazil had a rightist military government; Portugal had just gotten rid of its fascist dictatorship through a leftist revolution in 1974. 1975 was also the year the PALOP became independent.

In 1986, representatives of all seven Lusophone countries were called for a meeting at ABL in Rio de Janeiro to reform and unify the orthographic standards of the community. The resulting document–"Analytical Bases of the Simplified Orthography of the Portuguese Language in 1945, Renegotiated in 1975 and Consolidated in 1986"–came to be known as the Orthographic Accord (R. Castro, 1987).

The 1986 Project was polemic in Portugal. The generally negative evaluation called for a revision of a number of its items. According to Houaiss, it "was considered too extreme....The strong opposition that it generated, especially in Portugal, was responsible for the failure of this agreement" (1991:14). Evaluating the 1986 Project, I.

Castro says it is both extremely conservative, since it kept the outdated bases of 1945, and revolutionary for its radical, amateurish simplifications (1987:XIII).

In 1988, ACL produced a revised version of the 1986 Project. By then the Portuguese government had set up its own counseling body of language experts, the National Council for the Portuguese Language (CNALP), which was officially called upon to analyze the 1988 Project. In June 1989, the committee issued a report pointing out shortcomings in the 1988 Project and recommending that it be accepted only after changes (CNALP, 1990). The negative report was not well received by the government, which then excluded its own CNALP from the debate (Guerreiro, 1991c).

In October 1990, the same group of representatives that drafted the 1986 Project met again to agree on a revised version of the 1986 and 1988 Projects, incorporating some of the suggestions in the CNALP report. The resulting document is the 1990 Accord–the focus of the present debate. Despite strong opposition from some groups, the Portuguese government approved the Accord, which has yet to be voted upon by the Brazilian Congress.

Political and economic instability in Brazil has prevented Congress from examining the Accord so far. In fact, it is reported that its defenders prefer that the agreement be examined after public outrage against the recent diplomatic problems between Brazil and Portugal over immigration[6] dies down (Hidalgo, 1993). In April 1993, a national conference of teachers and media professionals was held to discuss the Accord (A unificação em debate, 1993), but in general the orthographic debate seems to be muffled.

The 1990 Orthographic Accord

The Accord was signed on December 16, 1990, by representatives of the governments of all seven Portuguese-speaking countries and observers from Galicia. It is organized in 21 *bases*, or sections. Despite all the debate about the agreement (to be discussed below), the changes it proposes are relatively few, so that it qualifies as a minor spelling reform.

Some have ventured to actually quantify the extent of innovation that the 1990 Orthographic Accord wants to bring to the two official standards it aims at superseding. Couri (1992) says it affects "fewer than three thousand, or 1.98% of the 110 thousand most usual words of the Portuguese language." According to her sources, fewer than 600 words would have two spellings according to the unified orthography. Rattner (1992), citing sources from the Portuguese Academy (ACL), reports that the

Orthographic Accord would affect 1.6% of the words spelled in the Portuguese norm, 0.45 of the words in the Brazilian norm. Finally, Augusto (1992a) cites Houaiss as saying that Brazilians would have to spell 3% of their words differently according to the 1990 Accord–the Portuguese, 4%. As can be seen, the numbers vary and the criteria are never explicit, reflecting the emotional tone of the debate.

The Accord has three types of concerns. It regulates certain aspects already in use but which had not been specifically mentioned in previous orthographies. It introduces a series of "double orthographic standards," i.e., it makes it a rule that two spellings are acceptable for the same word depending on which "cultivated spoken norm" is represented (Portuguese or Brazilian). Finally, it introduces a few actual changes in spelling.[7]

The main spelling changes introduced have to do with the use of diacritics, or accents, the hyphen, and the silent consonants still spelled in European Portuguese (but deleted in Brazilian Portuguese).

In terms of the accents, there are two types of changes. On the one hand, the Accord eliminates the accents in three different types of vowel clusters presently used only in the Brazilian orthography, and reduces the number of obligatory differential accents to only one (*pode*, *pôde*). On the other hand, it sets optional spellings for words which are pronounced differently in Brazil and in Portugal (*gênero/género*, *Antônio/António*), or distinguished only in Portugal (*amámos*, past/*amamos*, present).

The use of the hyphen is regulated in a rather convoluted way, so that words that are presently hyphenated drop their hyphens, and vice-versa. These rules involve potential subjectivities such as not using a hyphen in compound words in which the notion of composition has been lost. There are also a number of exceptions.

The rules regarding the postvocalic silent consonants are the ones that affect the Portuguese the most. The Accord makes pronunciation a rule. The Brazilian official orthography (1943) does not have silent postvocalic consonants, so it does not have to change. However, the Portuguese presently spell a number of consonants which are not pronounced (the first in these clusters: cc, cç, ct, pc, pç, and pt). To make things more interesting, Brazilians do pronounce a few of these consonants where the Portuguese do not. This turns out to be an important issue for the debaters of the Orthographic Accord, especially in Portugal, and is discussed in further detailed below.

In addition to these, there are a few other minute changes limited to a few unusual contexts. Perhaps the most important of these is the elimination of one of the seven diacritics used in the Brazilian orthography, the umlaut or dieresis (ü).[8]

The Debate over the Orthographic Accord

In this section, I describe the arguments used by those who favor or oppose the Accord in various articles published in the Brazilian and in the Portuguese press. I do not claim this to be a comprehensive report, but rather a description of the range of arguments found in a small but hopefully representative sample of the debate. Most of the texts examined come from two series of articles published by the Portuguese newspaper *Expresso* in its magazine on June 1, 1991, and by the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* in a special section about the Accord published on January 24, 1993. A few other articles were also examined, most of them published in the Brazilian press in 1992.

The debate involves various groups: government agencies; educational associations; writers and journalists; language academies; the mass media; other specific groups; and public opinion (Geerts, van den Broeck & Verdoodt, 1977). The main identifiable government agency involved is the Portuguese CNALP, created in 1989 as a consulting body of language experts. The two language academies, ACL and ABL, figure prominently in the debate as the sponsors of unification. In addition to these groups, a few individuals are especially important.

The main proponent of the Accord in Brazil is Antônio Houaiss, a renowned scholar known primarily as a philologist and translator. His commitment to language planning issues is not new. Besides being a champion of the Accord, he has written on the need for standardization and renovation of scientific terminology as necessary steps for Portuguese to maintain its status as a language of culture. An ABL "immortal," Houaiss is also a member of the Brazilian Socialist Party, having run for vice-president in the near-winning ticket in 1989. In 1991, Houaiss was nominated as the Minister of Culture, and in 1993 he left the ministry to represent Brazil in a U.N. organ.

The support of such high ranking officials for the Orthographic Accord in Brazil cannot be disregarded. In addition to Houaiss, supporters of the 1990 Accord include former President, José Sarney, and José Aparecido de Oliveira, former Minister of Culture and ambassador to Portugal. They are also the proponents of the creation of an Institute for the Portuguese Language, seen by some Portuguese as an effort to promote Brazilian linguistic hegemony in the Lusophone community. The importance of these sponsors of the Accord is indicated by the headlines of the Portuguese newspaper *O Semanário* when announcing the nominations of Houaiss as Minister of Culture, "The Orthographic Accord is in Power," and of Aparecido de Oliveira as

ambassador in Portugal, "And the Institute for the Portuguese Language comes to Lisbon" (reported by Couri, 1992).

On the Portuguese side, the main supporter of the Accord seems to be the Minister of Culture, Pedro Santana Lopes, accused of neglecting CNALP's urging for further studies and modifications before the 1988 Project was approved and also of promoting a rush for the approval of the 1990 Accord in the Portuguese parliament (Guerreiro, 1991c). In addition to Lopes, the Portuguese President, Mário Soares, also favors the Accord.

These powerful debaters favor the Accord and back up the official discourse in its text. Critics of the Accord argue that they have personal interests in the implementation of the orthographic unification. Both positions are discussed in the next section.

The Positions in the General Debate

The opinions about the Accord can roughly be divided into two main camps: those who feel a unification accord is not necessary, and those who feel it is desirable.

According to the view that a single orthographic standard is unnecessary, there is no good reason to worry about changing or unifying the orthographies of Portuguese. Most of those in this camp do not question the official objectives of the Accord. Some (such as A. Renault, an ABL member, cited in Piza, 1992) call the whole thing nonsense. Others, however, highlight what they believe are more important issues, such as education of the people, literacy campaigns, or the standardization of technical vocabulary. Santos (1993) states that the allocation of resources to the Accord diverts attention from the true pressing needs of Brazil in terms of culture and education.

Roberto Cardoso Alves, the Brazilian representative who heads the committee examining the issue in Congress, is one of the few critics of the Accord who actually refers to the official objectives of the unification (Nogueira, 1992). Alves does not think that "an agreement is essential to promote the culture and the language." However, he adds that, despite his personal opinion against the Accord, he would recommend it for approval "in deference to" his friend José Aparecido de Oliveira.

Another group of debaters in this camp points to the uselessness of the Accord because, as they argue, the fact of the matter is that there are two languages involved, and that no unification reform or agreement can change this fact. They are not saying the Accord is not desirable, but that it is impossible.

In the other camp, there is a much more visible contingent of debaters. The common thread among them is the desire to have one single spelling for the entire

Lusophone community. Their views of the ways to attain this ideal differ substantially. Those concerned with reaching some unification agreement once and for all defend the Accord as it is. Others argue the 1990 Accord is too defective to qualify as a definitive solution to the orthographic quest, a position summarized in the title of an article in the Portuguese press (Guerreiro, 1991a:76-R): "From desired accord to the undesirable Accord."

Both these views are supported by various arguments discussed below. Meanwhile, a few take a position without discussing the merits or shortcomings of the Accord. José Saramago, probably the most widely read Portuguese writer in Brazil, simply says an Accord is necessary (Couri, 1992). His position is symptomatic of the entire debate, especially in light of his request that his books be published in Brazil in the Portuguese orthography. Another case in point–now from those who oppose the Accord because of its political rather than theoretical or scientific criteria–is that of University of Lisbon linguist Maria H. Mira Mateus, who refused to make further comments on the matter after the Portuguese government disregarded the recommendations made by its own body of language experts (CNALP, 1990; Guerreiro 1991c).

A common charge against the format of the Accord is that the drafting of the document was authoritarian and unprofessional (Belard, 1991; Prieto, 1992; Piza, 1992; Cagliari, 1993). Some resent the limited debate before its approval by the Portuguese government; others call for further debate in Brazil before Congress votes the Accord bill.

Finally, some opponents of the Accord suggest that a reasonable solution to the "orthographic quest" would be the mutual official recognition of both standards. This suggestion is never addressed by the proponents of the Accord in the documents examined.

The Official Discourse and the Voices of Opposition

The official discourse regarding the Accord, namely that of the drafters of the text, the two language Academies and the Portuguese government, is that a unified standard for Portuguese orthography would bring more prestige to the language and to the Lusophone community internationally (Houaiss, 1991; Riding, 1991; Couri, 1992; Houaiss, 1993). Silva and Gunnewiek summarize the strong version:

> The orthographic unification which is being pursued attempts among other things to facilitate the use of the Portuguese language in international organizations such as OAU, OAS, etc., and to liberate them from the

> diplomatically painful choice between the two official orthographies presently used (1992:75).

Less grandiose versions of the argument claim that Portuguese is the only language of culture with two official orthographies,[9] and that this must be corrected "to strengthen the Portuguese language" (Málaca Casteleiro, Portuguese philologist, in Couri, 1992), and "to avoid the disintegration of the language" (Houaiss, 1991:15).

Most opponents do not question these arguments and only criticize the Accord as a bad solution to the unification question. The 1989 report issued by Portuguese language experts on the 1988 Project (CNALP, 1990) rejected it as was, but echoed the present Accord's premises that "the coexistence of two official orthographies hurt the intercontinental unity of Portuguese and its prestige in the world" (CNALP, 1990:69).

Among the opinions examined, a rare example of a critic who does refer specifically to the official discourse supporting the Accord is a Portuguese journalist (Belard, 1991). He does not question that grand objective, but reinforces it by asserting that the Portuguese norm should be the one used by the UN, since in his view,

> what makes Portuguese deserve a new status in international organizations is not the fact that there are another 20 or 50 million Brazilians, but the emergence in 1975 of five new sovereign states that have it as their official language.

While most of these critics do not embrace the cause of unification openly either, there is hardly any questioning of the official agenda, and there seems to be a tacit (perhaps unconscious) agreement among debaters that Portuguese really needs a unified orthography. Exceptions are found in the latest opinions collected. Brazilian grammarian Gama Kury, arguing against the Accord said: "It would be a merely political agreement, not a linguistic one" (in Hidalgo, 1993). A Brazilian professor of Portuguese also refers to the Accord as "above all else, a political question" (Santos, 1993).

Thus the ensuing debate involves two different frames of reference: The drafters of the Accord and most of those who favor it have the necessity of a unification as their primary concern. The ones who would like an Accord on particular grounds–linguistic, scientific, educational, or editorial efficiency–have those particular grounds as their primary concerns. Most language experts take this stance. The debaters therefore have incompatible agendas. Portuguese linguist Mira Mateus' decision to withdraw from the debate makes sense in this context since she sees no role for her purely scientific expertise in discussions with powerholders concerned with political efficiency.

Arguments

A Similar Debate

Geerts, et al.'s (1977) analysis of a similar debate over the Spelling Reform of Dutch-Flemish that unified the orthographies used in the Netherlands and Belgium guided my initial analysis of the arguments used in the Luso-Brazilian case. In fact, a remarkable similarity can be found between the types of arguments used in the two cases. The fact that both situations involve polycentric standard languages (Stewart, 1968), i.e., two variants of the same standard language,[10] seems to account for the similarity of arguments displayed.

There are, however, three great differences between the two cases. First, the Dutch-Flemish case involves two nations with contiguous territory, whereas in the Luso-Brazilian case the two nations are located in different continents and hemispheres. The second difference has to do with the status of the polycentric standard: In the Dutch-Flemish case, the orthographic norms codify the literary standard superimposed on the speakers' regional dialects, with little concern for the role of one of the centers in the unified standard. In the Luso-Brazilian debate, however, there are no regional dialects to speak of, and the concern for not letting "the other" standard prevail is great. A third difference is that the relationship between Belgium and the Netherlands involves no colonial history.

These differences are reflected in my discussion of the debate. Issues and arguments were similar in both cases, but did not always coincide, as the table below illustrates (Figure 1).

The Habituation Argument.

According to Geerts, et al., those who use this argument say that "one is accustomed to a certain spelling and, however inconsequent this may be, it will always take some time to get used to a reform and hence one would rather stick to the status quo" (1977:202). In opposition, there are those who say: "It is simply a matter of time. After a while one gets used to the new spelling and soon forgets the old" (Geerts, et al., 1977: 202). In the Luso-Brazilian debate, we find a synthetic version of the argument, expressed by the Portuguese President, Mário Soares: "We must evolve" (in Couri, 1992).

Figure 1

	Arguments listed in Geerts, et al. (1977) in the debate of the Dutch Spelling Reform	Similar arguments in the Luso-Brazilian debate of the 1990 Orthographic Accord
1	Habituation	Habituation
2	Esthetic	Esthetic
3	Corruption	(insignificant)
4	Laziness	(non-existent)
5	Frequent change	Frequent change
6	Surrounding cultures	Tradition
7	Older culture	Tradition
8	Homograph	Tradition
9	Financial	Editorial
10	Etymological	Tradition
11	Word image	Instruction/Habituation
12	Instruction	Instruction
13	Social	(non-existent)
14	Revolution	(non-existent)
15	Dialect	(non-existent)
16	Prestige	Official
17	Encouragement/Discouragement	Instruction

The Esthetic Argument

Geerts, et al.'s ***esthetic argument*** (1977) appears in a subdued form within the Luso-Brazilian context, but it seems to have been a prominent one in the debate that rejected the 1986 Project. In fact, many of the opinions quoted in the press resound from that earlier debate, and refer to items which have been dropped in the 1990 Accord. Two examples of words "made ugly," ***super-homem*** and ***bem-me-quer*** becoming ***superomem*** and ***bemequer***, are often cited, even though the words are no longer affected by the 1990 Accord.

The Frequent Change Argument

This is a recurring argument in the Luso-Brazilian debate, with a more comprehensive reach than described for the Dutch-Flemish discussion. Geerts, et al. gloss it as: "This is the hundredth change in a relatively short time. Can't we finally stop

making fools of ourselves" (1977:203). Although this is said often unreflectedly by those who dismiss the Accord as unnecessary, some critics also come up with theoretical support for it. A Brazilian applied linguist (Cagliari, 1993) argues that in terms of literacy the less an orthography is changed, the more valuable it is. Some Portuguese critics refer to the fact that the Accord will "reinforce the orthographic instability" of the language (Belard, 1991). Aguiar e Silva, the former coordinator of the Portuguese government's counseling commission on language (CNALP), is quoted as saying the Accord will disrupt the accepted Portuguese norm in the EEC and in the PALOP.

Of course, the counter arguement is that unification must come now, or it will be impossible in the future. Also, some say that there have been so many changes in the past without casualties, that this time it won't be worse. This is an implicit argument in the discourse of those whose concern is that there be an orthographic unification.

The Financial/editorial Argument

The *financial argument* as presented by Geerts, et al. (1977) is a major one in the Luso-Brazilian debate. It states: "Each spelling reform requires respelling and reprinting of many books and this is too expensive" (p. 204). In the Luso-Brazilian debate the argument takes various forms, and it might be better to refer to it as the *editorial argument*.

Houaiss (in Couri, 1992) sees the Accord as beneficial to the global Lusophone readership because it will enable the circulation of books which, according to him, are currently restricted to a single orthographic jurisdiction. Inês Duarte, a linguist at the University of Lisbon, argues that it is exactly "this fallacy" that makes the Accord "something similar to the emperor's new clothes." According to her, co-editions will not be possible because the Accord, by allowing for optional spellings, is in fact keeping the problem which prevented co-editions from being produced: the two standard orthographies.

In more clearly financial terms, there are critics who say that the Accord is the result of special-interest groups and individuals intending to reap profits from the publication of dictionaries, grammarbooks and manuals, since all present materials will be made obsolete. This opinion is expressed most directly by a professor at the University of Lisbon, president of the Movement Against the Orthographic Accord (Prieto, 1992). The Brazilian deputy in charge of examining the Accord in Congress has said "there are many commercial interests [behind the Accord], interests in new editions of grammarbooks, dictionaries, elementary school textbooks" (Nogueira, 1992).

Another twist of this argument is that the Brazilian publishing houses, believed to be more aggressive than the Portuguese, are interested in expanding their markets to Portugal and into the potentially lucrative PALOP school textbook business (Riding, 1991; Neves, 1991; Santos, 1993). As Cooper points out, "variability in written forms also imposes a problem upon printers and publishers, who seek as broad a market as possible for their texts . The larger the population that shares a linguistic norm, the larger the publisher's market."(1989:137) At least one Brazilian publisher, Arthur Nestrovski, validates this view, in spite of his position against the Accord (Piza, 1992). The editorial director of the largest Brazilian publishing house specializing in didactic materials, José B. Duarte, who favors the Accord, denies the charges on the basis that the Portuguese editorial market is very solid (Piza, 1992).

Interestingly enough, some critics of the Accord are the publishers who use the same *financial argument* to say that the cost of having to redo the typesetting of their collections would be huge and would jeopardize the publication of important titles now available (Piza, 1992). This turn of the argument is mentioned in Portugal as well (Neves, 1991; Pedrosa, 1991). The CNALP report against the 1988 Project also discusses the editorial argument at some length (CNALP, 1990:75-76).

The strong version of this argument develops into concerns for the real interests of some of the champions of the Unification Accord. Prieto, for instance, actually accuses Houaiss, the main proponent of the Accord in Brazil, of being interested in turning his own dictionary (under preparation) into a best-seller (Rattner, 1992).

This raises questions about the role of the language planner in the implementation of the orthographic unification. Cooper observes that in standardization efforts, language is often used as "a rallying point for the formation of national consciousness, but those who promote the language also promote themselves as a protoelite who will come to power with the political apparatus they create" (1989:69). In the light of these words, we can find some resonance to Prieto's otherwise unfounded accusations, especially when the official agenda of supranational integration and the positions held by its champions come to mind.

The Instruction Argument

Whereas in the Dutch-Flemish spelling reform this argument had to do with the dis/advantages of a simplified orthography for the children who must learn it, in the Luso-Brazilian debate the instructional consequences of the Accord are referred to within the discussion of other arguments. It is present in the *editorial argument*, since it is said that the Brazilian publishers want to dominate the PALOP textbook market, which

would mean that those countries would actually witness a spelling reform (going from the Portuguese to the Brazilian norms within the "optional norms" in the Accord). There is also concern for the state of confusion that might result from these "optional norms."

Geerts, et al. also refer to an *encouragement/discouragement argument* used mainly by Belgians in the case of Dutch-Flemish unification. According to the critics, changes in the spelling would discourage non-native speakers from learning the language. Those defending the changes argue that the simplifications would actually encourage them to learn it. This two-way argument seems to be part of the larger *instruction argument* in the Luso-Brazilian debate, the non-native speakers being mainly the PALOP populations.

Another issue (treated separately by Geerts, et al. [1977] but which seems to fall under the *instruction argument* in the present debate) is the *word-image argument*, or the different views regarding the connection of language and spelling and the consequences of that to literacy practices (Cagliari, 1993; Guerreiro, 1991b:76-R). Geerts, et al. (1977) point out that this is also a part of the *habituation argument*.

The Portuguese "Silent Consonants" Issue

As was said above, one of the reformations of the spelling proposed in the Accord is the suppression of some post-vocalic consonant letters spelled but not pronounced in Portugal. To the Brazilians, who spell only the ones they actually pronounce, this seems straightforward enough as a positive simplification for the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, however, these consonant letters are important for a number of reasons, mainly that they mark the quality of the preceding vowel as a full-vowel and not a schwa (e.g., ***recepção***, ***recessão***, the *p* is never pronounced, but the second *e* will be pronounced */e/* and */ə/* respectively; in Brazil both *e*'s are pronounced */e/* and the *p* , in this particular word, is pronounced). This issue is not new,[11] and it lies at the base of the next arguments.

The Tradition Argument

Here I consolidate three arguments treated separately in the discussion of the Dutch-Flemish debate into one. The *surrounding cultures argument* and the *older culture argument* say that the more phonetic and less etymological spelling breaks the links with the spellings of other European languages (namely French and German) and with the culture of the past (the [pseudo-]etymological phase of Portuguese spelling). Both are voiced often in Portugal but rarely heard in Brazil. The head of the Portuguese Literary Circle (cited in Riding, 1991) calls the Accord "an offense to history." The

Portuguese philologist Lindley Cintra, one of the drafters of the Accord, concedes to this argument but explains that Portugal lacks the political clout to be able to produce a unified orthography for the Lusophone world and still keep the etymological spellings.

A third facet is the *homograph argument* in Geerts, et al. (1977). It maintains that the spelling reform will produce homographs, increasing the potential of misunderstandings. This is occasionally heard in the discussion of the consonants to be suppressed in Portugal.

The Pronunciation Argument

This argument also follows from the silent consonant issue in Portugal, and its logic will not be clear to a Brazilian without explanation. According to some Portuguese purists, the new spelling will affect the pronunciation of the vowel preceding the consonant to be eliminated. They fear that people will soon mispronounce those words, since they will miss the vowel-quality indicator. This is perhaps the most outlandish of the arguments in terms of modern linguistic and sociolinguistic theory. In his analysis of the debate of the 1986 Project, R. Castro discusses similar veins of "linguistic myths" (1987:119).

Ferguson refers to "the folk belief that the written language is the 'real' language and that the speech is a corruption of it." He points out that the currency of this belief plays a role in limiting "the conscious intervention in the form of language planning that the community will conceive of or accept" (1968:30).

What seems to be at stake, however, is an emotional attachment to these spellings on the part of the Portuguese, revealing an embedded argument not found in the Dutch-Flemish debate, where there is no concern regarding the prevalence of one standard over the other. I call this the *rejection of the Brazilianization argument*. This strong argument has been in the making in Portugal for some time, and actually develops into a number of corollaries. The Portuguese linguist R. Castro (1987:118), writing about the disclosure of the 1986 Project, identified four different types of reactions to the Project among educated Portuguese writing in the press. These reactions voice concerns other than those specifically linguistic. The geopolitical type of reaction focused on the consequences of the Accord to the definition of the areas of political and economic influence of Brazil and Portugal. The geocultural reactions were concerned with the policies of cultural influence within and without the Lusophone community. Ideological reactions were marked by nationalistic and xenophobic components. Finally, those of a methodological type were concerned with the management of the process that led to the Accord.

Rejection of the Brazilianization Argument

Few of the Portuguese critics of the Accord go on record, but the journalists writing about the debate, Riding (1991), Couri (1992) and Ascher (1993) refer to the Portuguese fear of the preponderance of Brazilian norms. C. F. Alves, a Portuguese journalist cited in an article by a Brazilian correspondent in Lisbon, is explicit: "We, the Portuguese, react because we are the most harmed: now we'll have a Portuguese that is badly written and badly spoken as the one in the *novelas*" (Couri, 1992), referring to the popular Brazilian programs broadcast on Portuguese television.

As a rare PALOP voice in the debate, Cape Verdean linguist Manuel Veiga (in Neves, 1991) sees no preference for either standard in the Accord. The official CNALP report (CNALP, 1990:77) refers to the Brazilian hegemonic interests in the creation of a Portuguese Language Institute headed by Brazilian senior politicians.

The Optionality Issue

This issue is generated by the very text of the Accord, which allows words to have (optionally) variant spellings in Brazil or Portugal. Most of these words are affected by the silent consonant issue, or are to be spelled optionally with the acute or circumflex accents (*é, ó* or *ê, ô*) according to the different national pronunciation. Critics charge that this will create an orthographic chaos, especially in the few cases where regional pronunciations would trigger two optional spellings for the same word within the same country.

The real point of this argument seems to be that the predicted optionality issue raises doubts about what an orthography is. If an orthography is a set of rules, and if the problem that the Accord tries to solve is the double official orthographic standard, producing rules stating optional spellings is a serious internal contradiction. One again is reminded of the suggestion of mutual official recognition of the two orthographies.

This issue is indicative of the incompatible frames of reference which guide the different debaters. Those who defend the Accord as it is, and who implicitly espouse the view that a unification must be reached now, argue that the 1990 Accord is the only possible political compromise at this point. Those who would prefer a more careful unification agreement want a unification that is scientifically sound as well as politically possible.

Conclusion

The debate over the orthographic unification Accord for the Lusophone world reveals a community that is ambivalent about its status, oscillating between a nostalgic

and self-aggrandizing drive to unity, and a more realistic concern with conflicting interests over limited resources that restricts integration. The latest diplomatic clashes between Portugal and Brazil over immigration, for example, expose the ugly aspect of the preponderance of pragmatic considerations of a political and economic sort over the emotional considerations about cultural or linguistic commonalty. Italo Zappa, a retired Brazilian diplomat, referring to the immigration matter, could well be warning about the orthographic debate: "Portugal is a foreign country and not an extension of Brazil in Europe, as some people tend to believe on the basis of sentimentalism. It has its own interests and it is only natural that it should try to defend them" (Gryzinski, 1993).

As the post-modern world loses its single hegemonic centers, and nations rearrange their alliances, it is inevitable that the Luso-Brazilian "special relation" (Riding, 1991) also change. The debate fails to discuss this directly, either because debaters do not want to face facts (sentimentalism), or because it is ideologically less complex to refer to "cultural integration" than it is to address issues in terms of politics and economics.

In addition, the general discourse of the debate has two different referents, depending on the purposes attached to the Accord by the debaters. The fact that the debate goes on as if the participants were all referring to the same purposes gives it a certain psychotic air that is at times ridiculous and at times irritating.

Cooper points out that the language resulting from corpus renovation "fulfills no new communicative functions (1989:154). But if the new forms carry out old communicative functions, they also contribute to the nonlinguistic goals which motivated the linguistic renovation." It is thus both comprehensible and perfectly legitimate that the Accord should be driven by the political wishes of the two Lusophone nations to have a unified orthography that will allow them to claim a more tangible (economic and political) status for their (variety of the) language. Yet, if we look at the official discourse candidly, it looks as if the fuel moving the unification impetus is the obstinate idealism of those who believe that the double orthographic standard prevents Portuguese from assuming the more prestigious role in international communication and in Western culture that it righteously deserves. This, however, is hard to maintain after a careful analysis of the debate, as it is also hard to ignore that the unification would naturally yield personal and political prestige to those who help achieve it.

In spite of that, the Accord merits recognition as a successful political and diplomatic achievement. It manages to unify the orthography in two countries that shared a common past, but that inevitably have different futures. In another vein, we can say, tongue in cheek, that the Accord has a noble diplomatic goal supported by powerful

sponsors and interests both in Brazil and in Portugal. The 1990 Accord is thus a success if taken on the terms of its official discourse, but it attains this success at the expense of linguistic efficiency. To the chagrin of those who would like to see an orthographic unification based on linguistic criteria, it seems that the 1990 Accord is the only possible unification document that can be drafted by the two Lusophone nations at this point.

As Portugal reacted chauvinistically to defend its tradition, its nostalgic past, against carelessly sprawling Brazil, the urge to produce a unification Accord at all costs overruled most concerns with linguistic efficiency. The result is that the official argument is weak in the face of the needs of the community of users of the language, as there are few objective linguistic reasons to favor the Accord as it is. Unfortunately, it is issues of linguistic efficiency–not high on the sponsors' agenda–that the most earnest opponents of the orthographic unification cling to.

Among the various testimonies and opinions reviewed in this report, two seem to be especially telling summaries. The first is the paradoxical statement by the Brazilian congressman who heads the committee examining the Accord, who sees no real purpose in it, but who nevertheless says he will recommend it since his friend, the present Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, wants it. The other is the statement by a Brazilian journalist at the opening of this paper: "Portugal and Brazil are staging a deaf war over a language that the world ignores even in its best literary forms" (Ascher, 1993).

Finally, the case of corpus renovation discussed here is indicative of the extent to which language planning is a political and ideological practice rather than a purely linguistic enterprise. The Luso-Brazilian Orthographic Accord for the Lusophone Community and the debate around it exemplify both the complexity of the forces that operate in language planning and the lack of clarity among language experts and users regarding what the activity is all about. It thus renders the academic knowledge about language planning an invaluable asset for language experts, which at present (at least in the Luso-Brazilian context) is not made use of in a systematic way.[12]

[1] Macedo (1983) and Freire & Macedo(1987) advocate the use of Creole as essential for the success of literacy campaigns in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

[2] The quotations from original Portuguese language sources appearing in this paper were translated into English by the author.

[3] Four main African languages are spoken in Angola, eight in Mozambique.

[4] I refer to spelling norms in opposition to orthography to make clear that an orthography is a set of spelling regulations that has been officially agreed upon.

5 The 1920's witnessed great transformations in Brazil, especially in the arts, emphasizing the definition of what was genuinely Brazilian and not simply transplanted European.

6 Reciprocal laws grant Brazilian and Portuguese citizens special immigration status. Due to Portugal's EEC membership and the increasing number of Brazilians entering the country to work, callings for revisions of such reciprocities have been heard in both countries.

7 For the complete official text of the 1990 Accord, see Houaiss, 1991:58-93.

8 In a recent example of the role of the press in the implementation of spelling changes, the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* quietly stopped using this diacritic.

9 To those who point out the case of English as a counter-example, Houaiss (1993) explains that the English "graphic variants" do not constitute separate orthographies. The CNALP report on the 1988 Project also dismisses the English counterexample (CNALP, 1990:70). Though it is true that the Portuguese orthographies, unlike British and American spelling conventions, are official standards based on laws, the differences can be argued to be equivalent. In fact, Cagliari (1993) argues that the differences between the Brazilian and the Portuguese orthographies are negligible as far as reading is concerned.

10 Stewart refers to the case of European and Brazilian Portuguese as an example of polycentric standardization, and to Dutch as an example of monocentric standardization. However, it is clear that in terms of orthography, Dutch (in the Netherlands) and Flemish (in Belgium) did have "a different set of norms exist[ing] simultaneously," as the call for a Spelling Reform to unify the two standards seems to prove (1967:534).

[11] The 1931 Luso-Brazilian Orthographic Agreement suppressed those consonants, but the Portuguese law promulgating the Agreement "suppressed" that item.

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